

**James Jeremiah Wadsworth (1905-1984)
Collection
A Finding Aid**



Livingston County Historian's Office
5 Murray Hill Dr.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
August 2022

I. Collection Summary

Title	James Jeremiah Wadsworth (1905-1984) Collection
Collection No.	C169
Extent	Twelve flat boxes (7.77 cubic ft.) and four legal document boxes (1.82 cubic ft.)
Date Range	1905-1972
Abstract	<p>This collection comprises photographs, correspondence, scrapbooks, reports, and other paraphernalia regarding James J. Wadsworth's life and career in politics. Beginning in the early twentieth century, Wadsworth was a moderate Republican and a well-known leader in Geneseo, Livingston County, N.Y. The majority of the collection focuses on his influential work at the United Nations and the FCC during the 1960s and 1970s where he would regularly traverse between Washington D.C. and his hometown of Geneseo.</p>
Languages	English.
Access and Restrictions	<p>Use of the documents in this collection is for serious research. The collection may be accessible by advance request and permission from the Livingston County Historian's Office. Any use of the material in print or online publications must be cited as follows: "Courtesy of Livingston County Historian's Office, New York." Additionally, all documents should be handled with care.</p> <p>To arrange to conduct research with the documents in the collection, contact the Livingston County Historian by mail at: 5 Murray Hill Drive, Mount Morris, NY, by phone at (585) 243-7955, or by e-mail at Historian@co.livingston.ny.us.</p>
Copyright	<p>Some materials may be subject to copyright. Researchers are required to seek written permission from the copyright holder to reproduce and/or publish materials under copyright.</p>

II. Biographical Information

By Kayley Hill, Intern at Livingston County Historian's Office, 2021-2022

James Jeremiah "Jerry" Wadsworth was born in the small town of Groveland in Livingston County, New York, on June 12, 1905. Jerry's father, James W. Wadsworth Jr., was a New York senator who was heavily involved in politics throughout his life. Jerry's mother, Alice Hay Wadsworth, was the daughter of John Hay, who served as secretary to President Abraham Lincoln and in the cabinets of President William McKinley and President Theodore Roosevelt. The Wadsworth family owned several thousand acres of farmland in the Genesee Valley, with which Jerry frequently helped.

During his childhood, Jerry attended Fay School, an independent boarding school located in Southborough, Massachusetts, until 1918. He then attended St. Mark's School, an Episcopal preparatory school located in Southborough, Massachusetts. At St. Mark's, Jerry was involved in the Drama Club, football, baseball, and boxing. Following his high school graduation, Jerry attended Yale University, where he played on the football team for three years, played baseball, boxed, ran track, and was a member of Skull and Bones. Jerry was given the superlatives "Most Versatile, Greatest Social Celebrity, Best Natured, Most Likely to Succeed, and Most Gentlemanly."

Jerry graduated from Yale in 1927 and married Harty Griggs Tilton of New York City, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin B. Tilton, that very same year. Not long after, in 1928, Jerry and Harty had their one and only child, Alice Ann Wadsworth. The young family returned to the town of Geneseo in the Genesee Valley, where Jerry successfully operated over 300 acres of his father's land, specializing in dairy farming as well as raising and selling work horses. Jerry received his pilot's license as well as expanded on other passions such as music, art, and participating in the town of Geneseo's semi-professional baseball team.

Due to his likeability, impressive education, and family history, Jerry was soon nominated for and voted in as a member of the New York State Assembly in 1931, where he focused on the anti-prohibition movement. In 1938, Jerry became a chair of the Joint Legislative Committee that focused on discrimination of employment based on age, specifically for those older than 40 years. That same year, Jerry received the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor. Jerry was the youngest candidate running for the lieutenant governor position, and in many ways his youthful perspective amongst the Republican Party was his appeal. Jerry wanted to revise welfare laws if elected; however, he lost the race to an older candidate. Despite this loss, many saw it as a sign of good fortune, as one commenter stated, "the party is saving you, Jerry, for top place on the ticket."

During World War II, Jerry was ineligible to fight due to an injured leg, and instead contributed by working as an assistant industrial relations manager for the airplane division of the Curtiss-Wright Corporation. Following the end of the war, Jerry directed the Public Interest Division of the War Assets Administration, where excess war materials were sold for good use. In 1948, Jerry secured a position as a special assistant to

Paul G. Hoffman in the Economic Cooperation Administration. This then led him to join the National Security Resources Board's Civil Defense Office as Deputy Administrator to Paul J. Larsen in 1950, where he made a defense plan for the United States during this time of uncertainty in international affairs.

This defense plan resulted in President Truman appointing Jerry as deputy administrator of Federal Civil Defense, causing the family to move to Washington D.C. In this position, Jerry had to create defense plan while the fear of atomic bombs spread in threat of communist powers. This plan earned Jerry a position as deputy chief representative of the United States to the United Nations, as appointed by President Eisenhower in 1953. Jerry resigned from his deputy role in the Federal Civil Defense Administration to become a key component of the National Security Council and moved back to New York State.

With this new position, Jerry and his wife Harty traveled to various conferences in Europe, taking photographs and saving every ticket, playbill, invitation, and hotel receipt along the way as memorabilia. In 1955, the pair traveled to London, England, for the UN Delegation Sub-Committee of Five of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In the following years, he continuously participated in the United Nations General Assembly, often to discuss atomic weapons. In 1957, Jerry and Harty traveled to Vienna, Austria, so Jerry could serve as UN Ambassador for the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the years following their time in Vienna, Jerry was invited to be the US ambassador for the Conferences on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests. This position resulted in the couple traveling back and forth from Geneva, Switzerland, and the United States for almost three years.

In 1960, President Eisenhower appointed Wadsworth as a permanent US ambassador to the UN, in which he served until 1961. In the '60s, Jerry published two books, *The Price of Peace* and *The Glass House*, both novels detailing negotiation skills used in the United Nations. In 1965, Jerry's wife, Harty, passed away at the age of 59. That very same year, President Johnson appointed Wadsworth to the Federal Communications Commission, on which he served until 1969.

In 1967, Jerry married his second wife, Mary Alphin Donaldson of Arlington, Virginia. Mary was also widowed, her late husband being Scott W. Donaldson. The new couple moved from the Hartford House in Geneseo, the grand estate in which generations of Wadsworths had resided, to a cozier home in Geneseo for retirement. During this time, Mary's son lived with the pair, looking up to Jerry for his vast knowledge. In 1970, Jerry worked for the American Team negotiating a charter for the International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium for some time before finally retiring after decades of working for the government.

In 1980, Jerry authored his final novel, *The Silver Spoon: An Autobiography*. Almost as an honest goodbye letter, this book outlined Jerry's life of privilege and success from his humble perspective. Four years later, on March 13th, 1984, James Jeremiah Wadsworth died in Rochester, New York. His body rests at Temple Hill Cemetery in Geneseo, Livingston County, New York. Jerry left an impression on the community as a calm, strong, and intelligent force that excelled at any interest he tried, and could even get the Soviets to smile.

III. Background Information

The collection was given to the Livingston County Historical Society by Wadsworth family descendants in the 2000s and subsequently was donated to the Livingston County Historian's Office in 2020 for better storage and access. Some items, including artifacts and photographs, were scanned by the County Historian's Office and kept as a digital series, but the originals retained by the historical society.

IV. Contents

- Box 1** Scrapbook, news clippings, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, NY Assembly race, 1931
- Box 1** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, St. Mark's School, 1922-1925
- Box 1** Scrapbook, The Answer of the Atom: Twentieth Annual Lord & Taylor Award Luncheon, April 12, 1957
- Box 2** Scrapbook, clippings about Assembly member James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1936
- Box 2** Photograph album, James Jeremiah Wadsworth family photos, Yale University, and some clippings, c. 1927-1931
- Box 2** Scrapbook, James J. Wadsworth Federal Communications Commission, 1969
- Box 2** The Vindex, St. Mark's School, 1923
- Box 3** Scrapbook, clippings about James Jeremiah Wadsworth and race for lieutenant governor, 1938
- Box 3** Scrapbook, news clippings about Assembly member James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1936-1937
- Box 3** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, London, GA Atomic Energy Resolution, 1955
- Box 4** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth as deputy administrator of the Federal Civil Defense Administration and Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, 1950-1955
- Box 5** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, invitations, 1953-1955
- Box 6** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, Geneva atomic test ban talks, 1958-1959
- Box 6** Photographs from Ghana, undated (c. late 1950s)
- Box 6** Photographs from Geneva, 1959
- Box 6** Miscellaneous photographs, James Jeremiah Wadsworth
- Box 6** Copy of birth certificate, James Jerry Wadsworth
- Box 7** Scrapbook, invitations, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1956, 1967
- Box 7** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, Geneva atomic talks, 1959-1960
- Box 8** Photograph album, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, Geneva, 1960
- Box 8** Scrapbook, clippings, Assembly member James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1938
- Box 8** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1957-1958
- Box 9** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, Vienna, establishment of IAEA, 1957
- Box 9** Photograph album, James Jeremiah Wadsworth and Harty Tilton Wadsworth, Geneva, 1958

- Box 10** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, Atomic Peace Conference, 1955-1956
- Box 11** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, including UN, arms race, etc., 1958-1960
- Box 11** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, UN, 1960-1961
- Box 12** Scrapbook, James Jeremiah Wadsworth, UN Ambassador, 1957-1958
- Box 12** Loose photographs
- Box 13** UN General Assembly, 1953, 1954, 1960
- Box 13** Security Council on Dominican Republic, 1960
- Box 13** International Club 1968-1970
- Box 13** Geneseo Address, 1970
- Box 13** Statement before House subcommittee Intl. Orgs. And Movements, 1970
- Box 14** Addresses by James Jeremiah Wadsworth, 1954-1960, 1963-1968
- Box 14** Resignation, 1961
- Box 14** Correspondence, drafts, and materials on James J. Wadsworth's books *The Price of Peace* and *The Glass House*
- Box 15** FCC communications, work, and publications, 1951-1969
- Box 15** 1966 *Youth Wants to Know* television program and 1967 John J. Mason interview
- Box 15** Political work for Vietnam advisory panel, World Law Fund, and Human Rights
- Box 16** Miscellaneous letters, 1961-1970
- Box 16** Finance records, 1961-1970
- Box 16** Newspaper and magazine clippings on James J. Wadsworth's personal and political life, 1930s-1970s
- Box 16** Miscellaneous documents and pamphlets describing James J. Wadsworth's involvement in organizations and biographical works

V. Related Materials

Livingston County Historical Society, Geneseo, New York

Artifacts related to James J. Wadsworth. (1905 – c.1984)

Special Collections, Milne Library, State University of New York at Geneseo

Wadsworth Family Papers (1790-c. 1950)

The collections consist of approximately 50,000 items from the land offices of the two branches of the Wadsworth family of Geneseo and cover the years 1790 to about 1950, with most dating from the 19th century. Business correspondence and ledgers, vouchers, deeds, maps and other business-related materials make up most of the collections. Milne's collection does not include official papers from the terms of Congressman James W. Wadsworth (1846-1926) or U.S. Senator James. W. Wadsworth, Jr. (1877-1952).

Library of Congress

James Wadsworth Family Papers (1730-1959)

Correspondence, diaries, financial papers, scrapbooks, clippings, photographs, and other papers of the family of James Wadsworth (1768-1844) and his brother, William Wadsworth (1761-1833), who settled in Geneseo, N.Y., in 1790 and endowed schools and libraries there. A portion of the collection also focuses on Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr. (1877-1952).